

Artist (Youse)

Always the artist

Gay Youse tribute on exhibit

By Lesley Mahoney
STAFF WRITER

Gertrude Ann Youse was a teacher by example. In the words of Virginia Freyermuth, a student of the late artist, teacher and gallery director, "Gay" Youse lived what she loved and encouraged others to do the same. "I think if Gay gave herself any sort of label at all, it was an artist," said Freyermuth, art director for the Duxbury schools, during a reception honoring Youse Sunday at the Art Complex Museum in Duxbury. "A Tribute to Gay Youse," a 15-piece exhibition of the artist's work, is on display at the Art Complex Museum through April 5.

"She was first and fundamentally an artist. She lived the life of an artist. She said to me, 'People should follow what they love to do.' She felt it was so important to seek out one's own passion... and make a life out of that," said Freyermuth, part of Sunday's five-person panel discussing Youse's talent, influence, and legacy.



The exhibition was spearheaded by a former student of Youse's, Nat Simkins, who suggested shortly before her death in 1994 that the museum assemble an exhibition honoring Youse. The museum's curator of exhibitions, Lisa Weber Greenberg, has done just that.

While Youse's body of work includes still life, portraiture, and sculpture, Greenberg "felt strongest about her landscape and, with the exception of one self-portrait, focused the exhibition on that."

The exhibition progresses chronologically and by subject. It begins with what Greenberg calls "traditional and academic" renderings such as "The Sarah Wingate Taylor House, Clark Island" and "Apple Trees, Duxbury," to the looser, innovative interpretations of Maine's Western Island.

Greenberg, who did not know Youse personally, did not have any trouble finding people who knew and loved the artist.

"She touched so many people's lives in such a meaningful way," she said. "That's probably her biggest tribute, that she really had kind of a direct effect on people's lives."

Evelyn Day is one such person. Through Day, Youse came to know and love Corea, a small fishing village east of Maine's Northeast Harbor — another favorite of Youse's.

Since she was introduced to Corea in the early 1980s, Youse made scenes from the village the focus of countless paintings.

On one wall, four paintings of Western Island hang. The spot, visible from Day's "Cranberry Cottage," was a recurring subject for Youse.

"In a sense, I think she was obsessed with it. She would go there every day morning and night and paint the same scene over and over again," said artist Iso Papo.

"One of my fondest memories is Gay on our lawn with her casel and big, duck-billed hat, not always

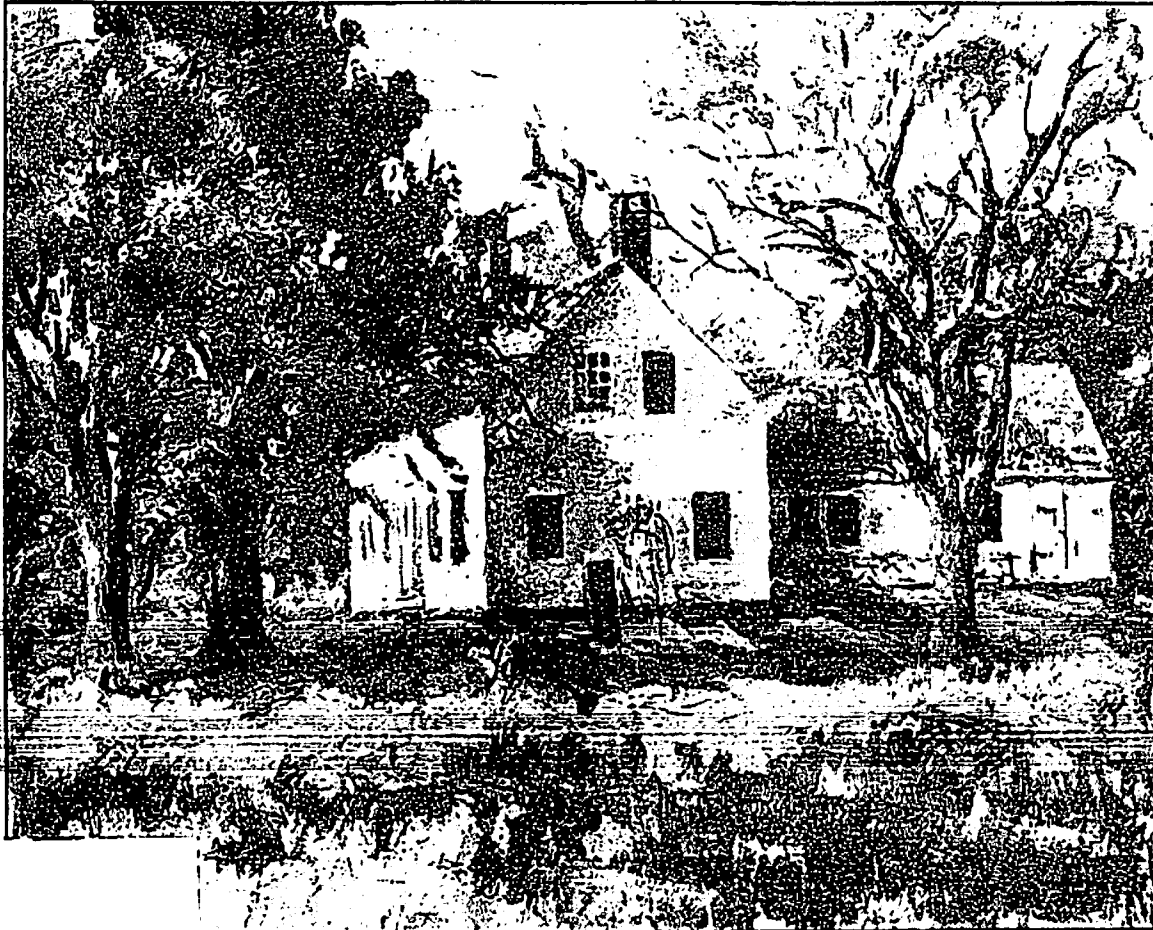
painting but sometimes staring," Day said. "When I asked her, 'Why always Western Island?', she said, 'I have to get it right.'"

The fact that a view of Western Island was named "Gay's Point" and commemorated with a bench in her name is testimony to Greenberg that Youse was a master at "creating a sense of place."

Constance Parvey, a close

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CONSTANCE PARVEY



"The Sarah Wingate Taylor House, Clark Island" along with other landscape paintings by Duxbury artist Gay Youse are on exhibit through April 5 at the Art Complex Museum in Duxbury. Friends, colleagues and students of Youse' shared their recollections of the remarkable artist at a special reception Sunday.

Fred Robertson Photo

friend of the late artist and one of two ministers who delivered a eulogy at Youse's 1994 memorial service, said Youse's work was born of something spiritual. She said she would accompany Youse to Duxbury Beach in a nor' easter or just before.

"Gay very much liked direct contact with creation," said Parvey, noting that connection is evident in Youse's paintings.

"I feel as though this (exhibi-

tion) is a celebration of Gay's resurrection. These paintings are vital, so alive and so full of compassion and feeling," Parvey said.

"She would say, "Happiness is outside in God's sunshine... on Duxbury Beach, on the coast of Maine... If we don't open our eyes to the beauty around us, it's like going through life with your eyes closed," said Freyermuth, remembering Youse's words.